

Concept of organic egg production

Organic egg production is the production of eggs through organic means. In this process, the poultry are fed organic feed. According to the United States Department of Agriculture, organic means that the laying hens must have access to the outdoors and cannot be raised in cages. Organic egg producers cannot use antibiotics except during an infectious outbreak. Only natural molting can occur within the flock; forced molting is not allowed. Organic certification also requires maintenance of basic animal welfare standards.

In the United States, "organic" egg production means that the flock may not live in cages and must have access to outdoor area. Organic egg producers in the United States do not always grant meaningful outdoor access to their organic laying hens; most industrial-scale organic egg producers generally build small wood or concrete porches attached to the henhouses, which passes as outdoor access.

Group	Item shed	Time	Notes
Chickens	Feathers	Usually autumn (non-commercial hens).	Chickens generally stop laying eggs when their moulting begins and recommence laying when their new feathers have re-grown.

Differences between "Free Range" and "Organic"

Significant differences cover feed, medication, and animal welfare. Organic hens are fed organic feed; it is prohibited to feed animal byproducts or GMO crops which are not disallowed in free range environments. No antibiotics allowed except in emergencies and required animal welfare standards in organic farms, which can improve the quality of both the eggs and the meat practices.

Organic feed

Organic feed is grown by certified organic farmers. To become a certified organic farmer, the crop must be free of genetically modified organisms (GMOs). The crop must be free of GMOs and synthetic fertilization for three years before it can be certified for organic usage

Antibiotics

Antibiotics or **antibacterials** are a type of antimicrobial used in the treatment and prevention of bacterial infection. They may either kill or inhibit the growth of bacteria. Several antibiotics are also effective against fungi and protozoans, and some are toxic to humans and animals, even when given in therapeutic dosage. Antibiotics are not effective against viruses such as the common cold or influenza, and may be harmful when taken inappropriately.

In 1928, Alexander Fleming identified penicillin, the first chemical compound with antibiotic properties.

Organic egg producers cannot feed low-level antibiotics to the poultry. Antibiotics are only allowed during an outbreak of infection or disease.

Organic certification

Organic certification is a certification process for producers of organic food and other organic agricultural products. In general, any business directly involved in food production can be certified, including seed suppliers, farmers, food processors, retailers and restaurants.

Requirements vary from country to country and generally involve a set of production standards for growing, storage, processing, packaging and shipping that include:

- ❖ avoidance of synthetic chemical inputs (e.g. fertilizer, pesticides, antibiotics, food additives), irradiation, and the use of sewage sludge;
- ❖ avoidance of genetically modified organisms;
- ❖ use of farmland that has been free from prohibited chemical inputs for a number of years (often, three or more);
- ❖ for livestock, adhering to specific requirements for feed, housing, and breeding;
- ❖ keeping detailed written production and sales records (audit trail);
- ❖ maintaining strict physical separation of organic products from non-certified products;

Free-range eggs

Free-range eggs are eggs produced from birds that may or may not be permitted outdoors. The term "free-range" may be used differently depending on the country and the relevant laws, and is not regulated in many areas.

Pastured poultry



A free range pastured chicken system

Pastured poultry is a sustainable agriculture technique that calls for the raising of laying chickens, meat chickens (broilers), and/or turkeys on pasture, as opposed to indoor confinement. The American Pastured Poultry Producers' Association (APPPA) was formed to promote pastured poultry. Its membership consists largely of pastured poultry farmers. Though pasture feeding improves the nutritive quality of ruminant meats, the effect of pasture feeding on poultry meat composition is not well established. The pens that house the fowl can be made from wood and scrap metal or out of PVC pipe and white tarps.

Pastured poultry is also gaining popularity because it helps the farmer, through reducing capital costs, and increasing pasture fertility. It is very well suited for incorporation within a system of managed intensive grazing. Pastured poultry is not limited to chickens and turkeys. It includes a variety of other birds, including ducks, geese and exotics in the poultry family.

Free-range poultry

Free-range is a very sustainable production system that improves the farmer's soil and produces poultry with strong bones and meat with good "mouthfeel". Combined with proper aging after slaughter the meat is tender and flavorful.

The Happy Egg Company is one of the UK's largest free-range egg brands.

Problem description

- breed suitability, origin and rearing of stock;
- housing, behaviour and welfare;
- types and sources of acceptable feedstuffs to provide suitable rations at reasonable cost;
- animal health and treatment, in particular coccidiosis, salmonella and feather pecking;
- stocking densities, access to range and manure handling/utilisation;
- market demand and marketing channels, including availability of processing facilities; and
- financial costs and returns of poultry enterprises.